



Agenda for Action '98

This *Agenda for Action* sets out Region 5's goals, priorities, and plans for fiscal year 1998. It guides the Region and focuses activities where they do the most good.

The Agenda for Action is primarily an internal document to help Regional staff prioritize their work, but it is also of interest to the Region's partners and stakeholders.

Contents

- [To All Region 5 Staff...](#)
- [Overview](#)
- [1998 Regional Priorities](#)
- [Delivering on the Regional Priorities](#)
- [1998 National Priorities](#)
- [EPA Strategic Goals](#)





January 30, 1998

To All Region 5 Staff:

As we move into another year of environmental protection, we want to highlight for you some of our hopes and expectations for the Region. We completed a very successful year across the board in all of our programs, and we were especially strong in enforcement and compliance assurance throughout the Region. Although we lost our leader of 27 years, Valdas V. Adamkus, to his homeland of Lithuania, we need to press on in the spirit that he created during his distinguished career at EPA.

This year, more than ever before, we need to make sure that our actions lead to tangible environmental results and advance us toward the 10 goals set out in EPA's strategic plan. By focussing our resources on the five regional environmental priorities and the priorities set out by our national programs, we have the best chance of solving the most important environmental problems that stand in the way of achieving our goals. With the additional emphasis we place on certain geographic areas and natural resources within the Region, and the use of the new problem-solving approaches we have developed, we believe that we can bring about real environmental improvement — where it counts the most — in the most effective way.


The Agenda for Action should help all of us to understand better how all parts of our environmental protection program fit together. The driving force is the EPA Strategic Plan of September 1997. With that, we take the Environmental Performance Partnership Agreements with our States and the Tribal Environmental Agreements with our tribes, and blend them into the Region's Agenda for Action. The focus within the Agenda for Action is on our five Regional environmental priorities and the national program priorities. Although each of you concentrates your efforts on certain priorities in specific areas using different approaches, it is important to understand how your work fits into the bigger picture of the work done by the Region. With this broader understanding, we believe we all can be more effective.

Partnerships with the States and tribes continue to be essential for our success. We are also working more with local governments than ever before, and our community-based approaches increasingly bring us in direct contact with the general public and other, specific-interest groups. We must also continue our reinvention efforts to explore new and better problem-solving approaches.

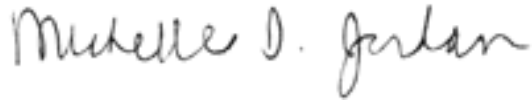
Internally, implementation of our diversity action plan is our highest priority. We want full and equal opportunity for people to advance in our organization and play a bigger role in

contributing to our success. This year we must also improve our planning process and our accountability system.

Each year we have new challenges and opportunities to make it the best year ever. Let's take full advantage of this as we advance toward our vision — a sustainable environment and high-quality of life for everyone to enjoy.



David A. Ullrich
Acting Regional Administrator



Michelle D. Jordan
Deputy Regional Administrator

 [Back](#)

[Next](#) 



Overview

EPA's 10 [Strategic Goals](#) express the environmental outcome we are all working toward: clean air, water, and land; safe food, homes, and workplaces; sound science, greater compliance with environmental laws, and access to environmental information for all Americans. These national goals set the course for EPA in the coming years and define the standards against which EPA's progress will be judged. Many of the Strategic Goals correspond to EPA's legislative authorities. The goals are embodied in EPA's Strategic Plan. The plan encourages the use of nontraditional approaches, as well as traditional programmatic approaches. This plan is intended to be dynamic and flexible, able to accommodate the needs and priorities of the American public.



EPA Region 5 has looked at the environmental issues facing the Midwest and has identified a number of issues that challenge our ability to meet those national goals: the ubiquitous presence of toxic substances, the continued urban expansion into rural and agricultural areas, the resulting abandonment of urban Brownfields areas, the loss of critical habitat, the disproportionate exposure to environmental risks of children and some minority populations, and the challenge of cleaning up contaminated sediments. These regional priorities present vastly more complex environmental problems than single legislative authorities were designed to address. These issues will require several authorities to respond in coordinated effort. And, such effort will ultimately enable EPA Region 5 to make significant contributions toward achieving the Strategic Goals. These regional priorities, more than any others, require

comprehensive environmental responses, in which EPA programs are seamlessly implemented, multiple-agency programs and resources are closely aligned, and public buy-in and commitment are sustained.

These environmental priorities figure prominently in the Region's priority geographic areas throughout the six-State region: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The nine priority geographic areas are: the Great Lakes (particularly Lakes Erie, Superior and Michigan), Upper Mississippi River, Northwest Indiana, Greater Chicago, Southeast Michigan, Northeast Ohio, and East St. Louis-Gateway areas. In these key geographic areas, EPA works in partnership with the community to achieve common environmental goals. Many traditional and nontraditional approaches will be needed to make and sustain great strides in environmental protection in the future. Expanding these approaches provides flexibility, which creates innovation and responsiveness to the needs of a given situation.

These regional priorities are emphasized for FY 98. So, too, are several of the national program priorities. The national programs correspond to EPA's legislative authorities. These authorities have historically been the foundation for environmental progress, have driven the development of the Strategic Goals, and continue to be the primary tools EPA will use in the key geographic areas. For FY 98, the national program offices identified 17 priorities. These national priorities help focus the work of individual environmental programs within EPA Region 5. They are short-term steps toward the strategic goals.

By focusing and aligning EPA programs and authorities, by working closely with communities, by maintaining some flexibility and using nontraditional approaches, we can advance toward our vision of a sustainable environment where air, water, and land resources are restored and protected to benefit all life. From year to year, in measured steps, we work to identify and solve environmental problems in common-sense ways.

For FY 98, the regional leadership team places special emphasis on continued reinvention efforts and the enforcement program in the course of our work. With organizational changes completed, reinvention efforts shift into the continuous improvement mode. The Region actively seeks more effective ways to do business and ways to improve the quality of the work we do. Not all reinvention efforts are new, however. Some, such as the enforcement program, are renewed. The deterrence effect of our enforcement program remains a critical and often unique role for the Region. That role will continue to be played in conjunction with other approaches.

Finally, the regional leadership team recognizes the need for EPA to better reflect the communities we serve by increasing diversity in the workforce. Diversity brings in different experiences and perspectives, allowing everyone to benefit from their

experiences with and in the Region. Employee development efforts are designed to recruit and retain a high quality, diverse workforce needed for environmental leadership.

This agenda is a road map through the regional and national priorities for FY 98. It is meant to be a living and dynamic document, responsive to our partnerships and changing conditions. Where possible, the specific activities and expected outcomes for FY 98 are highlighted. Individual plans supporting the priorities, the places and approaches have been developed and are available through the contact list in the back of this document. These plans detail activities for FY 98 and move us toward a restored and sustainable environment.





1998 Regional Priorities

The FY 98 priorities follow from the FY 97 priorities, which were based upon an assessment the serious environmental issues facing the Midwest over the coming years. The Region recognized some gaps in legislative authorities, identified geographic areas with the greatest environmental impacts, and devised new approaches for solving new or remaining problems that cross program lines. The priorities, geographic places and approaches highlighted in the Agenda for Action are not exclusive. Environmental program work continues across the Region. Work with our partners to identify problems in places is on-going, and is addressed in the traditional program context. However, the Region's overall strategy for achieving strategic environmental goals is to focus on a shorter list of cross-program priority environmental problems, in specific places, using identified approaches to ensure clear and measurable outcomes are achieved.

The regional environmental priorities for FY 98 are:

- [Reducing Toxics, especially mercury](#)
- [Promoting Sustainable Urban Development and Reuse of Brownfields](#)
- [Cleaning Up Sediments](#)
- [Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Critical Habitat](#)
- [Protecting People at Risk, especially Children and Environmental Justice Communities](#)

These regional priorities represent major environmental problems in this Region — problems that affect a significant population or resource, or are best dealt with using a combination of solutions; frequently requiring nontraditional approaches because they are not adequately responsive to singular programs. These are the kinds of issues that require multiprogram efforts and significant public support to progress toward solutions.

Reducing Toxics, especially Mercury



The need to reduce toxics is a recurrent theme in every place-based team, every program, and every regional priority. Releases of toxic substances have caused serious adverse effects in humans and damage to the environment. Region 5 has made reduction of toxics a priority and continues to support the regionwide Toxics Team to assure that the efforts of the Region, States, tribes, and other groups to reduce toxics reflect a multimedia perspective, are as effective as possible, and use sound science and technologies.

The Toxics Team continues to focus on the reduction of mercury releases, implementation of the Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy, investigation of endocrine disrupters and toxaphene, and the reduction of lead.

At the core of our toxic reduction efforts are the environmental data assessments, which identify emerging issues, allow assessment of possible sources and loads, and help measure program effectiveness. In FY 98, numerous data assessments will be on-going, including the possible sources of toxaphene, assessment of sources and loads in Lakes Superior, Michigan, and Erie watersheds (as well as other, smaller watersheds), and an air toxics source assessment completed by the States.

Numerous approaches are taken to reduce toxics, in addition to reductions through regulatory programs. Pollution prevention has, and continues to be, an effective means for achieving toxic reductions. For example: the Region will continue to focus on sewage treatment plants, to design programs that identify sources of pollutants — especially mercury — for reduction at the source. This is expected to result in significant progress toward voluntary meeting of Great Lakes Initiative standards. The Region continues to support such national programs as the Green Lights - Energy Star, Global Climate Change, Great Waters, Urban Air Toxics programs, WasteWise, Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program, Environmental Leadership Program, and any 33/50 successor programs to reduce toxic chemicals. There are a number of regional projects that have evolved from community needs, such as PCB phase down and PCB Used Oil and Pesticide Clean Sweep programs, Great Printers Project, U.S. Auto Project, and various waste minimization projects.

The movement of toxics through the environment knows no political boundaries. Partnerships beyond the borders of this region are essential, particularly with the Canadian governments. Understanding how the quality of life is affected in other places is a key to making better decisions. In FY 98, the Region will work with our partners to develop implementation plans for the Binational Toxics Reduction Strategy, to collaborate on Great Lakes planning, and support environmental projects in Poland, Ukraine, and the Baltic region.

Promoting Sustainable Urban Development and Reuse of Brownfields



Urban sprawl into rural, agricultural land — Greenfields — is leading to a wide range of environmental, social, and economic problems. In the Midwest, only slight population increases are expected in the urban cores, while expansion into metropolitan Greenfield areas continues at double-digit rates. These patterns increase our dependency on the automobile (resulting in more air pollution), degrade or destroy natural areas and habitats, and increase flooding and nonpoint-source water pollution. An alternative to this expansion is the redevelopment of abandoned urban sites — Brownfields. Actual and perceived environmental contamination, and the threat of incurring cleanup liability, leave thousands of these urban sites ignored in most redevelopment schemes, feeding the perception of social abandonment as well as furthering industrial decline. Working with State and local governments, other Federal agencies, and regional authorities, we can help identify strategies that can lead to more sustainable development and a higher quality of life for communities.

Greenfields and brownfields work is at the heart of quality-of-life issues in the Midwest. Through the work of several regional programs and the Steering Committee on Sustainable Urban Development, the Region is promoting green development alternatives, such as reuse of older subdivisions or retail spaces, cluster siting of buildings, pedestrian and bicycle friendly projects, mixed-use zoning, transit-oriented development, preservation of natural features, and many other alternatives. The committee is developing materials for public outreach, to help share information and success stories at the local-government level. The committee is also working to increase inter-agency coordination to better align programs for the support of smart urban development options.

The regional programs also support these development options by promoting better transportation patterns to deal with the long-term growth of vehicle miles traveled, using of natural storm-water retention methods, and promoting better community planning for watersheds, to prevent degradation due to nonpoint-source runoff related to urban development. Under the environmental impact statement process, the Region helps partners and stakeholders to recognize and incorporate secondary land-use impacts in the development and analysis of project alternatives.

The Region's Brownfields effort have produced a significant amount of concrete results through site assessment and cleanup, clarification of liability issues, and partnerships with States, local governments, and community organizations. Expanded activities this year will focus on practical partnerships with other Federal agencies, problem-solving and technical assistance to communities, administration of Brownfields pilots, and further clarification of liability issues. Support to our partners within State and local governments will expand, as will our attempts to spotlight programs and projects which are particularly successful.

This year, a fly dumping prevention program will be put into place in several communities to

deal with the unsightliness and hazards of construction, demolition debris, and used tires on abandoned city property. Agreements with some States on voluntary cleanup of hazardous waste sites, toxic substances, and under-ground storage tanks creates incentives for owners and operators to clean up without significant Federal involvement.

Cleaning Up Sediments



Polluted sediments are the largest major source of contaminants to the Great Lakes food chain, and over 2,000 miles (97%) of the shoreline are considered impaired. The Region 5 sediment inventory contains 346 contaminated-sediment sites. Fish consumption advisories remain in place throughout the Great Lakes and many inland lakes. Contaminated sediments also cause restriction and delays in dredging of navigable waterways, which in turn can negatively affect local and regional economies. Contaminated sediments must be cleaned up — before these sediments move downstream or into open waters, which makes them inaccessible and cleanup impossible.

The Regional Sediments Team continues to focus on meeting EPA's sediment goals and supports contaminated-sediment sites where cleanup projects are or will be under way. There are many projects around the Great Lakes where actual dredging is under way or about to begin. The Sediments team is well positioned in FY 98 to provide technical assistance to project managers in a "SWAT" team approach. The Sediments Team is working closely with the regional data managers to develop a single regional sediment database. Through the Sediments Team, EPA is also a co-founder and partner on the Great Lakes Dredging Team, whose member organizations are focusing their efforts on improving the process for managing dredged materials from our navigable waterways.

Sediments clean up play a major role in the development of Lakewide Management Plans and Remedial Action Plans. These plans are mandated by the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. These multiagency planning processes are supported by partnerships with other agencies and the community, to ensure sediment cleanup in the context of broader watershed planning. Sediment sampling and characterization is also supported by a number of regional programs, most notably the Great Lakes National Program Office. It supports this work by using its *Mudpuppy* boat for sampling and provides technical assistance and funding for sediment cleanup demonstrations.

To minimize soil erosion and continuing sources of sediment pollution from nonpoint agricultural and urban storm-water runoff, EPA works closely with State agriculture departments and other Federal agencies, as well as with Farm Bill implementation and other programs that other agencies direct. Such preventative efforts can be enhanced through improved program alignment within EPA and with other agencies.

Protecting Ecosystems and Restoring Critical Habitat



Habitat degradation and loss is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the Nation, as recognized by EPA's Science Advisory Board and others. This conclusion is consistent with the international community's Biodiversity Treaty, which recognizes the loss of biological diversity as a global problem. Ecosystems in Region 5, beset by great alterations and biodiversity losses (due to population growth, deforestation, pollution, invasion of alien species, and so on), still sustain unique ecological communities and species that require protection or restoration.

Many agencies have some authority regarding ecosystem protection. In FY 98, the newly established region wide Critical Ecosystems Team will define its role with all other partners in handling ecosystem problems, collaborate on the Environmental Roundtable and other appropriate partners to define locations and characteristics of our most critical ecosystems — particularly the coastal marshes and near-shore aquatic biodiversity areas — and meet internal EPA needs for ecological assessments.

EPA commits to build its capacity for doing assessments and ensuring the quality of ecological-risk assessments. In the coming year, an ecological-risk assessment course to train-the-trainer will be held in all State environmental agencies. And significant advances will be made on the development of environmental indicators to measure progress as it really affects the environment. Staff across the Region will focus on this work, as will the State of the (Great) Lakes Ecosystem Conference in '98.

The Region continues to improve its program alignment in support of ecological protection and restoration. The advanced identification of wetlands program continues to support delineation of critical wetland areas and the Lakewide Management Planning and Remedial Action Planning public groups, which are particularly dedicated to identifying problems and developing solutions to ecological degradation. EPA is supporting a number of projects in FY 98, such as the marsh surveillance of species program, which will result in new data regarding the abundance and diversity. These programs not only contribute to our knowledge and databases, but sometimes are sponsored and directed by communities themselves.

The enforcement program is particularly effective in this area. Supplemental Environmental Projects — which may be credited against a portion of the penalty assessed in an enforcement action — can be used for habitat and ecosystem improvements. These opportunities are considered, as appropriate, during settlement negotiations for penalty cases. Enforcement actions as a deterrent are also necessary and are planned for illegal wetland filling and permit violations.

Protecting People at Risk, especially Children and Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities



Over the last decade, concern about the impact of environmental pollution on particular population groups has been growing. Studies have shown that children, low-income, and minority populations are most likely to suffer disproportionately from environmental pollution. The Region is committed to addressing the human health and environmental needs of these population groups. Through increased education and outreach to communities, targeted health and environmental research, improved public access to information, and the creation of stakeholder partnerships the Region aims to reduce human health and environmental impacts to these special groups.

In FY 98, the Region will continue to work with the States, tribes, communities, academia, and others to build capacity for the identification and reduction of disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental impacts in low-income and minority communities. The Regional EJ Team will continue to develop and provide the various EPA programs with tools to understand and confront EJ issues and improve the identification of EJ areas near industrial facilities. This will allow EPA to focus its actions (such as community education and outreach efforts, enforcement, and compliance assurance) and ensure that EJ issues are dealt with and that its ability to select priority projects in these areas is enhanced.

Many EPA and regional programs specifically target children and other sensitive populations. The programs include: Asthma Outreach, Chicago Cumulative Risk Initiative, lead strategy and lead-based paint initiatives, asbestos abatement programs (aimed at schools), pesticide safety in food and for agricultural workers and their families, and a growing number of educational software programs in these areas and in pollution prevention. Defining the scope of children's health issues will be a regional goal for FY 98. A children's health conference will be held this year for health-related agencies, to highlight the special considerations needed to protect children.





Delivering on the Regional Priorities

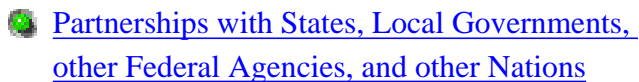
Consistent with the need to deal with multimedia environmental problems, the Region incorporates the multimedia team concept — not just for responding to the regional priorities, but also for doing comprehensive ecosystems planning and focusing on critical environmental themes, such as toxics reduction, ecosystem protection, children, and environmental justice issues. In addition, the traditional, single-media regulatory programs continue to be the primary means for implementing our environmental programs. They provide support to the teams and approaches described here. Finally, the unique role the partnerships with States and tribes have in reaching environmental goals needs to be recognized as an important means of delivering on the priorities and affecting long-term environmental change.

- [Regional Places and Approaches](#)
- [The Regulatory Programs and Regional Structure](#)
- [The Partnerships with States and Tribes](#)

Regional Places and Approaches

Within the regional team structure, the Region has designated nine key geographic areas for focusing on Regional 5 environmental priorities presented previously, as well as priorities of critical importance to the communities. The nine key geographic areas are: the Great Lakes (especially [Superior](#), [Michigan](#), and [Erie](#)), [Upper Mississippi](#), [Gateway-East St. Louis](#), [Greater Chicago](#), [Southeast Michigan](#), [Northwest Indiana](#), and [Northeast Ohio](#). The regional strategy also includes critical approaches to solving priority problems in the Region. Our critical approaches are:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Enforcement and Compliance Assurance |  Community-Based Environmental Protection |
|  Pollution Prevention |  Trust Responsibility for Indian Tribes |
|  Risk and Science-Based Environmental Protection |  Regulatory Innovation |
|  Measuring and Managing for Environmental Results |  Human Resource Investment for Change |



Organizationally, many of our priorities, key areas, and critical approaches operate as multimedia teams, meaning that they take into account all air, water, and land pollution in a given area. The geographic teams work with many agencies at all levels of government and with communities, to establish goals and priorities based on local needs. EPA brings its programs to the table in an effort to coordinate with those of other agencies and private parties, to reach environmental goals in a more comprehensive and cost-effective manner.

Each geographic area is unique in reflecting the needs of the community, the partners at the table, the history that resulted in the current circumstances, and the lessons learned along the way. Trust, long-term commitment, consistency, and big-picture perspective are basic values that need to be developed and nurtured for success in these partnerships. In general, EPA seeks to forge new alliances among local stakeholders, to enable communities to identify and solve environmental problems. Through joint environmental assessments and pilot projects, we hope to build local capacity for sustained environmental stewardship. A limited number of specific activities for the regional teams are highlighted here. Please use the contact list in the back of the document for further information.

Lake Superior: Largest fresh-water lake in the world (by surface area). Sparsely populated and relatively pristine. Through the Zero Discharge Demonstration Program, the partnership is trying to demonstrate that Clean Water Act goals can actually be met. *FY 98 Activities: Complete load reduction target document, develop draft load-reduction strategies, support P2 and sustainable development projects.*

Lake Michigan: World's largest concentration of pulp and paper mills and 40% of the Nation's steel production. A chemical mass-balance study for the entire lake is ongoing. The scientific knowledge of contaminant cycling gained here will be transferable everywhere. *FY 98 Activities: Continue chemical mass balance, support P2 and sustainable development projects with private sector, continue work on lakewide management plan.*

Lake Erie: The smallest, warmest, shallowest, and most biologically productive Great Lake supports major industrial, and recreational and fishing uses. Stresses from urbanization, agricultural use, and exotic species impact habitat and threaten food sources. *FY 98 Activities: Complete a problem-statement document, support P2 and enforcement-compliance assistance activities, support RAP development and other State, agency or community-based projects.*

Upper Mississippi River: Sedimentation problems is the most significant

threat. Navigation issues, tributary alterations, farming practices, and flooding contribute. Possible contributor to Hypoxia problems in Gulf of Mexico. *FY 98 Activities: Support demonstration projects, reach out to communities to modify existing practices, assess data and map flood plains.*

Northwest Indiana: Enforcement focus for old steel and petroleum refining areas. Sediment, ozone, and minority population issues. Area has rare and valuable ecosystems. *FY 98 Activities: Support partnership development, map critical habitat and wetlands, reach out to schools and public.*

Greater Chicago: Sustainable development focus for Southeast and West Side neighborhoods. Area suffers urban malaise, but is rich in potential human resources. Area also has rare and valuable ecosystems. *FY 98 Activities: Do technical studies on PAH's, lead, and slag reclamation; outreach on asthma; facilitate Calumet Ecosystem Partnership; do feasibility study for ecopark; and map blood-lead levels.*

Southeast Michigan: Area of high minority-low income population and depressed economy. There are five major rivers with impaired uses and contaminated sediment problems. Major releases of toxic substances, polluted air sheds, and land-use problems created by urban sprawl. *FY 98 Activities: Support Remedial Action Planning; enhance public-forum involvement, Brownfields redevelopment, and community focus on environmental planning.*

Northeast Ohio: This is our community-based environmental protection pilot office. Multimedia inspections focus on enforcement. Old industrial areas trying to go toward high-tech industries. *FY 98 Activities: Support "first stop" land-use project, develop economic-incentive approaches to air compliance, support small business workshops on P2-waste minimization.*

East St. Louis-Gateway: Major ozone, lead, and cadmium air-quality problems. Open burning, illegal dumping exacerbate odor and health problems. Area is American Bottoms Floodplain of Mississippi River. *FY 98 Activities: Support blood-level mapping, indoor air-quality assessment, and Regional Environmental Network.*

The regional approaches reinforce how work gets done. They make the regional Values Statement an active part of regional operations. Many of these approaches are not new, but may have new emphasis or meaning. By designating these specific approaches, an expectation for consistency and full regional assimilation is created. As these approaches become assimilated, new ones may take their place. This is a pathway for continuous improvement.

Enforcement and Compliance Assurance: Providing a strong enforcement presence and ensuring compliance through an array of traditional and innovative approaches is critical to deter future violations and to protect human health and the environment. *FY 98 Activities: Enhance the use of supplemental environmental projects, improve compliance for priority sectors and in principal places, develop procedures for getting communities more involved in enforcement, and expand our multimedia efforts.*

Community-based Environmental Protection Analysis: Improve Region's ability to maximize environmental results by collaborating with others to solve environmental problems in specific places. *FY 98 Activities: Develop training curriculum and coordinate training sessions, develop clearinghouse of references, provide an in-house seminar series.*

Risk and Science-Based Decision Making: Support the generation and consideration of technically sound, publicly accessible scientific information. *FY 98 Activities: Do risk and peer review, provide risk assessment and scientific analysis, support scientific forums, and communicate priority scientific needs to national programs.*

Customer Focus: Providing the best service possible to our customers through enhanced public communications and improvements, based on what we hear from our customers. *FY 98 Activities: Hold meetings with stakeholders, provide training and resources to improve employee outreach skills, facilitate community involvement in decision making, inform the public of environmental issues through the media, and provide the public with easy access to environmental information through the Internet, software programs, hotline, library, and publications.*

Measuring and Managing for Environmental Results: Evaluate conditions, identify problems, set environmental priorities, and measure performance as needed to solve the top environmental priorities. *FY 98 Activities: provide assistance on development of goals, objectives, and performance measures and support improvement of data management systems.*

Regulatory Innovation: Develop and provide new approaches to the existing regulatory framework — approaches that are more efficient and flexible, reward creativity and outstanding performance, and more effectively protect health and the environment. *FY 98 Activities: Develop a framework for managing innovation, work with partners to achieve acceptance, develop a system to monitor effectiveness.*

Human Resources for Change: EPA will invest in employees — through

training, education and other means — to ensure the necessary leadership in environmental programs. Region 5 is committed to providing an environment that fosters the recruitment, development, and retention of a high-quality, diverse workforce. *FY 98 Activities: Prepare career development curricula for every classification and grade and develop multiple career paths for employee advancement.*

Partnerships with States, Local Governments, Other Federal Agencies, and other Nations: Use the partnership concept for collaboration and sharing in environmental areas of common interest. *FY 98 Activities: Partnerships, used fairly ubiquitously throughout the Region and for some international work, will continue.*

Trust Responsibility for Indian Tribes: EPA will act as trustee in implementing environmental programs on Indian lands where the tribes themselves do not have authority or infrastructure to carry out the work on their own. *FY 98 Activities: Provide guidance to programs on fulfilling trust responsibilities, carry out tribal agreements, provide training on grants and contract management, and continue work with the Regional Tribal Operations Committee.*

The Regulatory Programs and Regional Structure

Our Division and Office programs in the form of the Air and Radiation Division (ARD), the Water Division (WD), the Superfund Division (SFD), and the Waste, Pesticides, and Toxics Division (WPTD) continue to administer the principal environmental laws. These laws remain our primary means for environmental management, and our Division and Office organizational structure generally reflects the most significant program elements. The Great Lakes National Program Office, housed in Region 5, leads the in the development and use of a broad range of programs for restoring and maintaining the integrity of the Great Lakes Basin.

Region 5 includes several support organizations that are critical to the success of the program Divisions and Offices, Teams, Approach Managers, and Regional Senior Leadership Team. The Resources Management Division, for example, provides internal resource services to our staff. This includes computer support, laboratory analysis support, financial tracking of grants to external partners, and payroll.

Our Office of Public Affairs provides public education, information and involvement services. The Office of Regional Counsel provides legal counsel to the Region. Our Office of Inspector General does audits, which assures that our partnerships and approaches remain

logical and defensible. The Office of Strategic Environmental Analysis frames emerging issues, pilots new multimedia programs, and develops environmental management approaches, such as Community-Based Environmental Protection, Measuring and Managing for Environmental Results, and Regulatory Innovation.

The Partnerships with States and Tribes

The Region believes that as public funds continue to dwindle, now more than ever, greater cooperation and coordination are needed to avoid duplication and capitalize on the strengths and resources of each agency. The States and tribes have shown leadership in a number of areas critical to meeting our mutual goals. The heavy investment in the Environmental Performance Partnership Agreements in FY 97 and again in FY 98 — to outline joint priorities and specific measures for all programs in one comprehensive document — is the most effective approach for achieving measurable environmental results. For FY 98, all six regional States have agreed to joint priorities in reducing toxic air pollutants and mercury releases and in proceeding with Brownfields urban redevelopment.

Region 5 continues to ensure that Indian tribes, which request environmental programs, have the authorizations and infrastructure to carry out these programs on tribal lands. Where tribes do not run the programs, EPA does so directly. There are 34 tribes within Region 5. Tribal environmental agreements present a joint multi-year plan to clarify agreements made, set environmental priorities, consider resource needs (as may be made available from year to year), and provide a forum for raising emerging issues. TEA's are in place for tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and for those participating in Michigan. We update these agreements annually. Each Division in the Region is developing a blueprint for implementing programs based upon commitments in the TEA's.

The components of this system provide the flexibility, organizationally and environmentally, to respond to the environmental challenges before us. Integration of this system into the Regional culture will continue in FY 98.





1998 National Priorities

Strategic Framework

In 1995, EPA embarked on far-reaching reinventions to change basic approaches on planning, budgeting, performance measures, and accountability. EPA developed a Strategic Plan as a result of these reinventions and requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. The act supports many of EPA's efforts to identify and use alternative approaches, to achieve greater environmental improvements in more logical, lower-cost ways, as well as to develop additional approaches to traditional regulatory measures. EPA's Strategic Plan identifies 10 specific, strategic national goals that will define EPA's direction in the coming years. The regional and national priorities in this FY 98 agenda advance EPA toward these national goals.

The national framework also recognizes the role States and tribes play in meeting the strategic goals. Over the past several years, there has been a move to measure the results of environmental work and increase accountability to the American public. National workgroups and organizations exist to establish agreements and formalize processes to achieve these ends. The National Environmental Performance Partnership System (NEPPS) is one such agreement aimed at, among other things, setting priorities and setting goals and measuring progress within the context of a partnership between EPA and individual States. The Tribal Environmental Agreements (TEA's) seek similar improvements in partnership. The Environmental Council of States (ECOS) with EPA continue to refine and evaluate core program measures for national use. Region 5 will continue to provide leadership in these efforts by seeking to continuously improve approaches to environmental challenges ahead.

Priorities

For FY 98, EPA national program managers identified 17 environmental priorities. These priorities are the steps that we need to take in the short term, to make progress toward the strategic goals in the future.

Office of Water FY 98 Priorities

Improve Drinking Water Safety: Implement Safe Drinking Water Act, Source-Water Protection and Small-System Capacity Programs.

Reduce Wet Weather Pollution: Control Storm Water, Sewer Overflows and Nonpoint-Source Runoff.

Protect Watersheds: Implement Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program in Watersheds.

The Region will continue to integrate these Water programs within the State and tribal programs to the extent provided by their respective authorities. The Region will help to build additional program capacity by providing technical assistance for: watershed monitoring, implementation of the Great Lakes Initiative (GLI) Standards, and convening public groups to solicit support the Total Maximum Daily Load program strategies. The Region retains leadership in a number of areas critical to support of States, tribes, and the regulated community, such as: maintenance of the State Revolving Fund program; database and grant tracking; cross-program integration with the public water supplies, ground water, nonpoint sources, and underground injection programs; Phase II storm-water regulation and guidance development, the Great Lakes Initiative clearinghouse, program implementation where capacity and authority do not yet exist, and enforcement of many cases.

The Water Division has many projects that by their collaborative work with stakeholders, help fulfill commitments to the community-based approach, protection of sensitive populations and protection of critical habitat. The Water Division will support an Environmental Justice study on possible pesticide contamination of water supplies for transient migrant farm workers and their families in Wisconsin. It will also support a ground-water nitrate and pesticide sources elimination program in parts of Wisconsin. Urban storm-water runoff projects are planned in most of the key regional geographic areas. And, program authorities will be used to enhance critical habitat in key areas — using tools such as the advanced identification of wetlands and enforcement for illegal filling of wetlands. These are a few examples of how National goals and regional priorities in key places will result in measurable environmental improvements.

Office of Air and Radiation FY 98 Priorities

Improve Air Quality Relative to Current National Ambient Air Quality Standards: Continue Redesignation efforts.

Establish Particulate Monitoring (PM)-fine Monitoring Network: Develop Infrastructure to Support Analysis of PM- Fine Particulates.

Implement the Air Toxics Program: Improve Implementation of Standards for Air Toxics

The Region 5 Air and Radiation Division focus in FY 98 will be on the these primary program areas: ground-level ozone, fine-particulate monitoring, air toxics, and indoor air quality, with special emphasis on reducing children's exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. First, efforts to reduce the precursors of ground-level ozone will intensify with the near-term goal of reducing emissions of nitrogen oxides from large power plants. Second, a new fine-particulate monitoring network will be established. Third, efforts to reduce emissions of air toxics that threaten human health directly and through deposition in the Great Lakes will continue through the aggressive enforcement of Maximum Achievable Control Technology standards and the development of State plans to control municipal and medical waste incinerators. Finally, outreach activities will be part of the Region's indoor environment activities, to reduce children's exposure to environmental tobacco smoke through voluntary actions in the home.

Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response FY 98 Priorities

Underground Storage Tanks and Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (UST-LUST): Accelerate Cleanups, Increase State Program Approval, and Implement the Program on Indian Lands.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Program: Take Corrective Action (CA) at High-Priority Hazardous Waste Facilities and Implement the National Combustion Strategy.

Superfund Program: Cleanup of Hazardous Waste Sites and Reduce Barriers to the Reuse of Brownfields.

The regional focus for the UST-LUST program continues to be direct technical assistance to tank owners and program assistance and oversight of State and tribal programs. Significant capacity building in this program will continue in FY 98 as the States continue toward program approval. By the end of FY 98, cleanup is expected to be started at 95.5% of facilities (71,500 tanks) and completed at 55% of facilities (41,000 tanks).

All Region 5 States are authorized for CA, which has been carried out at 134 (58%) of the

high- priority facilities. Stabilization measures, control of human exposure, or ground-water releases continues in FY 98, with emphasis on high-priority facilities. There are 23 permitted combustion facilities within the Region and 17 more still seeking permits. The regional focus is on oversight of facility risk assessment and trial burn plans for major commercial boilers and industrial furnaces with interim status.

The Superfund Division continues to lead all EPA Regions nationwide in completing cleanups at Superfund sites. In FY 98, 20 additional completions will be added to the national target of 65 by Region 5. That will bring the accumulated total of completion in Region 5 to about 60% of all National Priorities List sites in the Region.

Brownfields work is a high priority at both the national and regional levels and remains an excellent example of Federal-State-local collaboration, which can make a difference in the quality of life and economic conditions for many Americans. The Region 5 Brownfields program expects to double the number of cooperative agreements with municipalities for Brownfields assessment in FY 98, bring the total to nearly 40. In addition, there will be at least a dozen cooperative agreements with municipalities put into place in FY 98 to capitalize on the revolving load fund.

Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances FY 98 Priorities

Worker Protection Standards: Reduce Exposure to Pesticides.

Ground-Water Protection Program: Reduce Exposure to Pesticides in Ground Water.

Lead: Reduce Children's Blood-Lead Levels

Pollution Prevention: Integrate Pollution Prevention into Core Regional Programs.

The region works in close partnership with various State agencies and universities to reach the large population of farm employees and migrant workers in the midwestern States. Education and outreach on health effects and preventing pesticide exposure are aimed at workers, handlers and their families. At the same time, there is a regional focus on reducing ground-water exposure to the general public to five commonly found pesticides. Multi-program, multiagency coordination on ground-water protection plans is ongoing in the development and implementation of plans to deal with these pesticides.

The Region will move aggressively on reducing lead exposure in FY 98, with emphasis on protecting people at risk and building State and tribal programs to more effectively manage and reduce lead hazards. During FY 98, these efforts will focus on: 1) projects in each of the Region's five key areas, along with outreach and education for especially high-risk neighborhoods; 2) helping States and tribes to secure enabling legislation and to qualify for

Federal authorization of their lead-based paint training and certification programs; and 3) supporting EPA Headquarters in its further development of the national lead hazard reduction program. The region will lead efforts to improve cross-media communication and coordination on lead issues and commence lead-related enforcement under the real estate notification and disclosure rule.

Region 5 made great strides in recent years in building upon and expanding our partnerships with trade associations, States, and the Great Lakes Regional Pollution Prevention Roundtable. In FY 98, the Region will integrate P2 activities into all regional program plans, our environmental partnership plans, and all program agreements or memoranda of agreements. This action puts P2 considerations at the forefront of partnership commitments and reinforces the commitment to P2 as a means of identifying cost-effective solutions to environmental problems in all media.

American Indian Environmental Office FY 98 Priority

Tribal Priority: Assess Environmental Health Risks on Indian Lands.

In FY 98, the Region will participate in a national workgroup to design a baseline assessment survey and begin the preliminary assessments of all available regional data on tribal environmental conditions. This project will take a

few years to complete. However, where data indicate the need for carrying out our trust responsibilities, those needs will be met through program activities as appropriate.

Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance FY 98 Priorities

Maintain a Strong and Active Monitoring and Enforcement Presence.

Promote Widespread Use of Compliance Incentives: Encourage Regulated Entities to Voluntarily Disclose Problems, and Support Development of Self-Audit and Compliance Management Programs.

Ensure Data Quality and Reporting: Assure High-Quality Data.

Region 5 will implement the national goals through a vigorous, core civil and criminal Federal enforcement program, as well as by supporting enforcement efforts of the States. Region 5 will emphasize the importance of consistency in the enforcement program, attempting to balance case initiations with conclusions on a year-to-year basis. In particular, during FY 98, Region 5 will strive to initiate timely and appropriate responses to identified violations, emphasizing national and regional priorities, where feasible.

To encourage the regulated community to make broader use of EPA's self-disclosure policy in FY 98, we will aggressively market the policy and implement the regional procedure for tracking and resolving self-disclosures. Consistent use of the regional policy should stimulate increased use of audit and compliance management systems. Data quality is critical to the success of regional enforcement efforts. We will continue to obtain and maintain the most accurate data possible, both within the Region and from our States. To effectively assess the value of its enforcement program, Region 5 will strive for 100% responsiveness in the completion of case-conclusion data sheets, as well as in collection of core measurement data from State enforcement activities. Region 5 will continue its quarterly docket-program enforcement reconciliation activities to help accurate tracking and reporting.

Conclusion

Each year we move our Region closer to fully integrated implementation of environmental programs in key places and throughout the Region to achieve environmental results. We focus on the regional and national priorities in these key geographic areas, using many traditional and innovative approaches. We strive to establish partnerships that better align our programs and lead to building capacity at the most local level for sustained environmental stewardship. We are improving the environmental landscape each day, with each person and with each action. This is the course leading us into the 21st century. It is an aggressive one, filled with challenges. Together with our partners and the public, we can restore and protect the environment for ourselves and future generations to come.





EPA Strategic Goals*

1. **Clean Air**

The air in every American community will be safe and healthy to breathe. In particular, children, the elderly, and people with respiratory ailments will be protected from health risks of breathing polluted air. Reducing air pollution will also protect the environment, resulting in many benefits, such as restoring life in damaged ecosystems and reducing health risks to those whose subsistence depends directly on those ecosystems.

2. **Clean and Safe Water**

All Americans will have drinking water that is clean and safe to drink. Effective protection of America's rivers, lakes, wetlands, aquifers, and coastal and ocean water will sustain fish, plants, and wildlife, as well as recreational, subsistence, and economic activities. Watersheds and their aquatic ecosystems will be restored and protected to improve public health, enhance water quality, reduce flooding and provide habitat for wildlife.

3. **Safe Food**

The foods Americans eat will be free from unsafe pesticide residues. Children especially will be protected from the health threats posed by tainted food, because they are among the most vulnerable groups in our society.

4. **Preventing Pollution and Reducing Risk in Communities, Homes, Workplaces and Ecosystems**

Pollution Prevention and risk management strategies aimed at cost-effectively eliminating, reducing, or minimizing emissions and contamination will result in cleaner and safer environments in which all Americans can reside, work and enjoy life. EPA will safeguard ecosystems and promote the health of natural communities that are integral to the quality of life in this nation.

5. **Better Waste Management and Restoration of Contaminated Waste Sites**

America's wastes will be stored, treated, and disposed of in ways that prevent harm to people and to the natural environment. EPA will work to clean up previously polluted sites and restore them to uses appropriate for surrounding communities.

- 6. Reduction of Global and Cross-Border Environmental Risks**
The United States will lead other nations in successful, multilateral efforts to reduce significant risks to human health and ecosystems from climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, and other hazards of international concern.

- 7. Expansion of American's Right to Know About Their Environment**
Easy access to a wealth of information about the state of their local environment will expand citizen involvement and give people tools to protect their families and their communities as they see fit.

Increased information exchange between scientists, public health officials, businesses, citizens, and all levels of government will foster greater knowledge about the environment and what can be done to protect it.

- 8. Sound Science, Improved Understanding of Environmental Risk, and Greater Innovation to Address Environmental Problems**
EPA will develop and apply the best available science for addressing current and future environmental hazards, as well as new approaches toward improving environmental protection.

- 9. A Credible Deterrent to Pollution and Greater Compliance with the Law**
EPA will ensure full compliance with laws to protect human health and the environment.

- 10. Effective Management**
EPA will establish a management infrastructure that will set and implement the highest quality standards for effective internal management and fiscal responsibility.

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